

**Education Governance Responses  
Rutland Meeting (3/21/07) – Rutland High School**

15 Attendees (facilitated by Robin Scheu)

**Question #1: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the present education governance system in your community?:**

**Advantages**

Immediate local control – community members can talk directly with board members  
In a supervisory district superintendent prepares 1 report – less work  
Flexibility for individual districts to combine resources, when appropriate 1 best  
Opportunities for su/district staff to hear opinions/outlook of many  
Community culture is fostered  
Local control  
Members elected and responsive to own town  
Close link of school and community – all ages  
Rutland City set up is ideal  
Accountability of local board – a cost control  
Volunteer force (local boards)  
School choice (high schools)  
Supts. hear many points of view  
Local input & control  
Accountability  
Intimate knowledge of community

**Disadvantages**

Travel and transportation can be an issue when pooling across districts  
Students/opportunities confined to what individual districts can provide  
Multiple boards - #of reports/prep for su/district level staff #of meetings  
Number of superintendents avail. for positions  
Supt. spread thin  
No disadvantage to current system (Rutland City)  
Supt. not in buildings often if at all  
Demands more su management – cost issue  
Duplication of efforts  
High Supt. Turnover  
Too expensive  
Too much politics  
Too many people  
Lack of accountability  
Lack resource mgmt.  
Lack of long range planning

**Question #2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the school district model suggested by Commissioner Cate in his White Paper?**

**Advantages**

Less meetings for superintendent which makes position more desirable  
Much better opportunity for common curriculum/professional development  
Better use of human resources  
Save administration costs  
Fewer people involved  
Easier to manage  
Shared resources  
Reduce expenses?  
Attract superintendents due to meetings, reports, etc.  
Consolidation of staff and resources – programs and finances  
DCF & homeless students have a greater chance of less transitions  
Confidentiality of high cost students minimized with greater numbers  
Independent schools would fall into a greater – Cross town evaluations and services for special ed. students becomes easier  
“Experts” developed with combining of personnel (S.U.staff)

**Disadvantages**

One size does not fit all  
Not every school within a supervisory union has true choice of high schools  
Motivation of SU board would not necessarily match each town  
Loss of local control  
Challenge of formulating a tax rate  
Possible long distance bus rides for children if schools close  
Expense of busing  
Lack of local input  
Access to local control/representatives  
Minimal representation from individual towns on boards (1 person rep.entire town)  
Local control

**Debrief Comments:**

How would consolidation impact taxes?  
Will there really be cost savings?  
We don't feel smaller schools are necessarily more expensive  
We think the Agency of Human Services has unloaded much of their responsibilities on the schools  
Concerned about increasing school costs while school populations decrease  
If consolidation happens, who works out details?  
Governance changes need not impact the number of schools – will there be a domino effect from governance to schools?  
If districts are combined, who decides when/if a school closes due to number of students, cost of building, etc.  
Proportionate number of reps. from each town isn't fair (number shouldn't be based on size)  
School choice in Vt should only be available to other Vt public schools  
In 2006 \$5,105,877 went out of state to private schools . (Dept. of Education number).

\$5,000,000 spent on small school grants – why?

Why are we handcuffed by Federal Regulations – should we forfeit funding and do it ourselves.

Cost shift of social services to schools

Other unfunded mandates (state and local) are burden

What do we want education in VT to be? & how do you pay for it?

Closing comments:

When will recommendations be made? November

Will we really be listened to?

Focus on the white paper at these meetings

Talk with your legislator